

Message Text

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41

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

USIE-00 OPR-02 A-01 SY-05 OC-05 CCO-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

SCS-03 SCA-01 PER-01 ACDA-05 EB-07 FAA-00 DOTE-00

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O R 181550Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6261

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS NIACT IMMEDIATE

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1686

GENEVA FOR SAUNDERS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, LE

SUBJ: BEIRUT CLASHES CONTINUING

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REF: BEIRUT 11655

1. AS OF 1800 HOURS SEPT 18, FIGHTING CONTINUES THOUGH QUIETER IN MANY PARTS OF TOWN. CASUALTIES UNKNOWN BUT BELIEVED HEAVY. NEW CEASEFIRE PROCLAIMED FOR 1600 HOURS, APPARENTLY NOT WORKING. BEIRUT IS STILL VERY TENSE, AND CITY REMAINS MOSTLY CLOSED DOWN. HOWEVER, FIRES REPORTED REFTEL NOW GETTING UNDER CONTROL. AIRPORT OPEN AND PAN AM FLIGHTS ARE OPERATING ON NORMAL SCHEDULES.

2. INDICATIONS ARE THAT LEFTIST GROUPS SUCH AS NASSERISTS, IRAQI BAATHIST, ETC., ARE IN THE FIGHT WITH REJECTIONIST FEDAYEEN. ON OTHER HAND INTERNAL SECURITY SOURCE TELLS US THAT 'ARAFAT AND PLO ARE BEING HELPFUL. WE CONCLUDE FROM AVAILABLE EVIDENCE THAT FATAH IS NOT INVOLVED, BUT IS ON ALERT. PHALANGE IS MAIN FIGHTING FORCE ON OTHER SIDE.

3. YESTERDAY CABINET DECIDED FORM COMMITTEE OF CONCILIATION TO INCLUDE KARAME, CHAMOUN, RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS FACTIONS, WITH STIPULATION THAT CABINET WOULD MEET AGAIN IF COMMITTEE WAS UNSUCCESSFUL IN ITS CONCILIATION EFFORTS. CABINET MEETING IS UNDERWAY TODAY. ARMY INVOLVEMENT OBVIOUSLY SUBJECT OF MAJOR CONTROVERSY, WITH PRES. FRANGIE AND INTMIN CHAMOUN PROBABLY CONTINUING TO PUSH FOR ARMY INTERVENTION IN BEIRUT AND PRIMIN KARAME SEEKING TO AVOID THIS OPTION IF AT ALL POSSIBLE. ARMY COMMAND ITSELF HAS PLANS, WE KNOW, FOR "SURGICAL" CLEANSING OF BEIRUT WHICH WOULD AMOUNT TO FIGHTING LEFT WING FORCES. CABINET IMPASSE BETWEEN KARAME AND CHRISTIANS COULD INCAPACITATE GOVERNMENT AND RESULT IN HEAVY FIGHTING TONIGHT. LAMBRAKIS

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